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# Reminiscences of Early Rochester

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By Rev. Augustus H. Strong, D.D.



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## Reminiscences of Early Rochester

I am asked by your honorable Society to give you my "Reminiscences of Early Rochester." I have hesitated to do this, because my reminiscences are so personal. To tell you about river and canal, streets and buildings, pavements and bridges, in the days of long ago, with no mention of the men who lived here, or of my own connection with these places in the past, would be as dull as one of Walt Whitman's inventories. I cannot say that I was the principal man who lived here, but I am the only one whose impressions I can give at first hand. I am convinced that my only way to entertain you is Walt Whitman's way—his way of treating the whole universe as a part of himself. And so I begin, as he begins, by saying: "I celebrate myself." I describe Rochester as I saw it. It unfolded itself, to my childish eyes first, as a mystery to be solved; then, to my boyhood, it was a region of glamour; finally, it has become a notable center of population and influence, an inspiring workshop and a delightful home. You will pardon my seeming egotism, if I make my own personal history the thread upon which I string my recollections of many localities, otherwise too familiar to be interesting.

The south side of Troup Street, between Eagle Street and Washington, is memorable to me, for there it was that I first saw the light. I have sometimes said that I came to Rochester in the year 1836; perhaps I should have said that Rochester came to me. My first impressions were of a frame house, one and a half stories in height, diagonally opposite from the ground now occupied by the brick house of Mrs. Dr. Stoddard. Her ground was then an open common of several acres, with only a great smoking and rasping planing-mill in its center. Livingston Park, with the pillared mansion of William Kidd, was then the chief glory of the Third Ward. In my own humble habitation, my memory or imagination dimly discerns the gracious form of my mother, as she was in the days of her youth and beauty, and as, thanks to the generosity of my brother, her likeness is perpetuated in the Library, and her love for learning is commemorated in the structure, of this Catharine Strong Hall.

Out of the dim recesses of the past there emerge faint images of a garden plot, in which I sowed seeds, and then dug them up next day to see how they grew. In the rear part of the house was my grandmother's spinning-wheel, together with a churn and a pounding-barrel of my mother's. In the parlor, which was too sacred for common use and was opened only on Sundays, there was a big family Bible, which like the parlor itself was seldom or never opened, but which had a gilt cross on its bright red cover, with rays of gold proceeding from it in every direction, and this Bible, with its golden light, I tiptoed up to, in awe-stricken curiosity, in order to see. And in this parlor, Dr. Pharcellus Church, our pastor, with his swallow-tail coat and white choker, gathered the timorous children for prayers, when we could not run away in time, and out from the gate I made, when four years of age, my first excursion into the great world, running away from home, as I afterwards declared, "to hear Dr. Church preach."

My father was the chief proprietor of the Rochester Daily Democrat, and he used to instruct his children after breakfast by reading to them the news. One morning he read to us the account of a hanging. It occurred to me that it would be a nice thing to try on. When father had gone to his business, I discovered a rope dangling from the rafters of the woodshed, and a tub standing conveniently near. The bright idea entered my head that, by turning the tub upside down and standing upon its bottom, I could reach the rope and tie it around my neck. I was eight years old, and my brother was two years younger. I said to him: "Henry, when I get the rope tied, and I say 'One, two, three,' pull out the tub." Henry was perfectly agreeable, and he pulled out the tub accordingly. That is the last thing that I remember. Either my squirming or Henry's screaming called my mother to the rescue, and I was cut down. But I had a scar on my neck for six weeks after, and I learned a lesson which perhaps has saved me from a similar fate ever since.

When I reached the age of fourteen, the house on Troup Street had been sold, and we had moved to more comfortable quarters on the East side of the river. The old house was offered for rent, and it became the residence of Mrs. Fox, famous in the history of the Rochester Knockings. Her two daughters, Katy and Margaretta Fox, were the professed media of communications from the spirit-world. All Western New York was excited by the reports and the doctrines of Spiritualism. A gentleman

from Mount Morris, with his wife, came to this city to investigate. He applied to my father for an introduction to Mrs. Fox. But my father was not only a newspaper man. He was also a Baptist deacon, and this calling up the spirits of the dead seemed to him forbidden in Scripture. So he hesitated. Hospitality, however, was one of his foibles; he reflected that it would be his guest that would do the calling up; he himself would be only a looker on. He consented to take his two friends to the Foxy abode, and, to give me a new bit of instruction and experience, he took me along.

When we reached the house on Troup Street, we found it crowded with visitors. Every room, upstairs and down, was full; people were sitting on the very stairs. Our guest was a tall and stately man, a Presbyterian Elder, and, with his wife, one of the leaders of Mount Morris society. My father was a sort of public man, whom everybody in Western New York seemed to know and to respect. Mrs. Fox came to the door, regretted greatly that she could not receive so distinguished a delegation at that particular time. But would not the spirits grant us an interview? She would inquire. So she advanced from the front steps to the brick walk, with her daughter Katy, and she propounded the question. Raps were immediately heard upon the bricks beneath our feet. Yes, the spirits would meet us. When and where? At the house of Deacon Strong, that very evening. Imagine the consternation of my father. To house this growing heresy and blasphemy! But my father was a polite man, and courageous. Hospitality again conquered, and the spirits invaded our house on South St. Paul Street.

That was a memorable evening for me. It began very solemnly, with the wheeling out of a heavy mahogany center-table into the middle of the parlor. Then the company gathered tremblingly around it, and formed a closed circle by clasping hands about its edge. There we waited in silence. Katy Fox was opposite me. I thought I observed a slight smile upon her face. I was less observant of the proprieties at that time than I have been since, and I ventured, alas, to wink at Katy Fox. And I thought that Katy did something like winking in return. She was a pretty girl, and why shouldn't she? But she soon composed her countenance. The séance proceeded solemnly to the end. But for me there was no more solemnity nor mystery. All the rest of the performance seemed a farce.

There was no manner of doubt about the rappings. These began under the table. Then they seemed to proceed from the

floor. At last they came from the doors of the room, and even from the ceiling. Questions were proposed to the so-called spirits, and ambiguous or commonplace answers were spelled out. I do not remember a single communication that gave knowledge of any value, or beyond what the questioners already possessed. But the effect upon our two guests was great. That courtly gentleman got down on his knees and peered under the table, to discover the source of the sounds. It was all in vain. He was deeply impressed, concluded that these rappings were veritable messages from beyond the grave, went away a believer. Some weeks after, my father learned that his guests had left the Presbyterian Church and had joined the Spiritualists. He never forgave himself for leading those two innocents into temptation.

Not all of Mrs. Fox's visitors were so impressible. Miss Mary B. Allen was the preceptress of the best Rochester school for young ladies. Allen Street, I fancy, was named for her father; at any rate it was the location for her Seminary. Miss Allen was a maiden lady, sharp and wiry, with a grain of wit which could not tolerate nonsense. She concluded to investigate the Knockings. Katy Fox had been a pupil at her school, and this gave Miss Allen introduction to the home of the spirits. "Was there any one of her departed relatives or friends with whom Miss Allen would like to converse?" So asked Mrs. Fox. "Yes, I had a grandmother, whom I loved very much, and I would like to talk with her." "Is there any particular question that Miss Allen would like to ask?" "Yes; I am interested in education, and I would like to know something about methods in the other world. Spelling, for example. How does my grandmother now spell the word 'scissors'?" And the spirit of the grandmother spelled out "sissers." "Oh," said Miss Allen, "that is just the way Katy Fox spelled 'scissors,' when she was a scholar in my school!"

Speaking of schools, I must mention a school very near the place of my birth, which I attended when I reached the age of twelve. It was situated where Plymouth Church, the church of the Spiritualists, now stands. In the basement of a plain building, with gymnastic pole and merry-go-round in the center of the lot in front of it, Mr. Miles, a typical Milesian, reigned supreme. He was a stout Irishman, with long black hair and knotted muscles, who thought the rod the best instrument of instruction. Wackford Squeers, in Nicholas Nickleby, was his prototype. He was the best teacher of geography that I ever knew. But he



was a savage and a brute. He terrorized his scholars. He made life intolerable to those whom he did not like. He would fling a heavy ruler across the room at the head of a boy whom he caught whispering or napping. When a boy ran away, he would paint the word "runaway" on his forehead, streak his face with stripes of many colors, set him up on a barrel with coat turned inside out, and lead the other boys in an Indian pow-wow dance around him. For some trifling offence, he seized a boy by the heels and let him down head first into a pail of water, or sprinkled him from an elevation, while the boy lay face upright on the floor. These barbarities were unknown to the parents, for Mr. Miles threatened to kill the boy that told. I learned a great deal about map-drawing from Mr. Miles, but I am happy to say that he ended his days in a Western State's Prison when serving a sentence for bigamy. Only recently a worthy citizen of Rochester, whom he compelled to suck a bolus of assafetida in the presence of the whole school, has passed away. I have wondered what happened when he met Mr. Miles on the other side of Jordan.

My grandfather, Dr. Ezra Strong, lived in a house on the west side of Exchange Street, somewhere between our present Industrial School and the large chemical laboratory of Mr. R. J. Strassenburgh. My grandfather's house became famous for harboring William Morgan, who wrote, in its upper chamber, his exposure of the first three degrees of the Masonic Order. My grandfather knew nothing of Morgan's work, and was greatly surprised when Morgan disappeared and his body was found in the Niagara River near its mouth. The report was started that Masons had abducted and murdered him. At this late day, we can hardly conceive the bitterness and fury of the controversy that followed. It became the central theme of politics in Western New York. Many a church inserted into its Covenant a pledge that no one of its members should ever belong to a secret society. Thurlow Weed first rose to public notice by his leadership of the Anti-Masonic party, and it was his connection with my father's partner, George Dawson, that led to their ultimately joining in the ownership and conduct of the Albany Evening Journal. Thurlow Weed was for many years the virtual manager of the Republican party. When asked whether he was sure that the body found in the Niagara River was really the body of William Morgan, he replied that it was "a good enough Morgan until after election."

Our county jail was situated on the so-called "Island," between the Genesee River and the raceway, on which now stands our Erie Railroad Station. I have two reasons for remembering that old jail. The first is that, on a bright Sunday afternoon, I accompanied my father when he distributed tracts among the prisoners and gave them good advice through the grated doors of their cells. And the second reason is that my father, some years after, sent me with a pass from the Sheriff to witness a hanging. As if that scar on my neck had not been a sufficient deterrent from anger, malice and homicide!

There were better schools than that of Mr. Miles. I remember with gratitude old Number Twelve, where I got my first ideas of English Grammar and parsed the *Paradise Lost* under Principal Adams, and with still greater gratitude the old High School, where I first learned Latin and Greek under Professor Benedict. The High School occupied the ground on which the present Unitarian Church now stands. It was the roughest sort of a building, but the memory of it is sacred to me, because there I first conceived the idea that I could be something and do something in the world. There first dawned upon me,

"The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
And all the sweet serenity of books."

Professor Wetherel was an excellent teacher of English, but Professor Benedict was the teacher of the classics; and, though he was not great as a drill-master in grammar, he inoculated me with a love for classical literature, which I found greatly to my advantage when I went to Yale. And Professor Dewey—who could ever forget his demonstrations in chemistry, so humorous, so serious, so practical? A grand old man, afterwards Professor in our University, he left us long since, but fortunately we have his able and accomplished son, Dr. Charles A. Dewey, to remember him by.

I cannot end my account of the old High School without telling of the experience that made it chiefly memorable to me. The janitor of the building was Chester Heywood, an oldish scholar who paid for his tuition by sweeping floors, making fires, and ringing bells. He began Latin with me, ten years at least his junior. We had learned our declensions and conjugations, and were ready to begin the Latin Reader, when the Spring vacation arrived. Heywood was jealous of vacations; he was twenty-five years of age; he had no time to lose; he wanted to study. He assembled some of the younger boys, and proposed

that we should employ our vacation in seeing what we could do with the Latin Reader without a teacher. Most of the boys smiled and declined. They preferred to serenade the girls and to have a good time. I alone surrendered. I rose every morning at five o'clock and I studied Latin till night. In three weeks I read all the Latin laid out for the following term. When the term opened, Professor Benedict examined me, found that I had done my work fairly well, took me out of my former class, and set me with the older boys to reading Cicero. I learned that, where there was a will, there was also a way. I became ambitious, and perhaps a trifle conceited. But I had won the favor of my teacher, and with him I afterwards read Horace and Herodotus and Sallust and Aeschylus and Aristophanes, before I went to college. Those three weeks of vacation work changed the whole current of my life and encouraged me to act independently of my teachers.

My next habitat was at the Four Corners. There my father printed and published the Daily Democrat. Though I was prepared at the age of sixteen, he thought me too young to go to college, particularly since, under the influence of Theodore Whittlesey, a bosom friend of mine, to my sorrow taken to heaven many years ago, I had determined to enter Yale. So my father took me into his counting-room, where I had a year and a half of general training, more valuable than that of any single year in college. There I learned to keep the books of the establishment by double entry, to set type, read proof, take telegraph reports, collect bills, and manage other details of the office. The counting room was at that time a place of exchange for all Western New York. People gathered there to discuss the prospects of the wheat crop in the Genesee Valley, the election of Henry Clay to the Presidency, the laying of the Atlantic Cable, and the differences between the Old and the New School Presbyterians. Those discussions, especially when election time drew near, were often hot and vociferous. I learned lessons of business management, which served me in later days, in dealings with the trustees of Church and Seminary. One of my chief perquisites was access to good literature. The booksellers sent in books, for review. My father gave me the privilege of taking home the books I liked. So I was led to read, not only dime novels, but the essays of Lord Bacon and of Macaulay, the poems of John Milton and of Longfellow. At the end of my year and a half, I

had a stock of general information, upon which to draw, in college essay-writing and debate.

The windows of the printing office looked out upon the Eagle Hotel, which from 1829 to 1868 occupied the site of the present Powers Block. In that hotel, Rev. Charles G. Finney had his quarters during the great revival of 1830. There my father had called upon him for a private interview with regard to the concerns of his soul. Mr. Finney was writing near the window of the room, and he motioned to my father to sit down near the stove at the other end. At last the tall man rose and strode forward. "What is it you came to me for?" "I have been thinking on the subject of religion. But I have no feeling." The Evangelist bent forward towards the stove, grasped the iron poker, and came at my father, as if he would beat out his brains. Father was startled and rose. "Oh, you feel now, don't you?" said Mr. Finney, and went back to his writing. Father was so scandalized and indignant, that he left the apartment without even saying 'Good Morning,' but he began to ask himself what Mr. Finney could have meant. He concluded that it was an object-lesson, to teach him that, if he feared a poker so much, he would do well to be in fear of hell. At any rate his convictions deepened; he was soundly converted; and he became a deacon in the Baptist Church.

The greatest ash-pole that was ever raised in this country was erected at the corner of the Eagle Hotel. It took twenty horses to draw it to its place. Its cross-trees soared above all the buildings of the town. Its top-gallant mast carried the biggest flag Rochester had ever seen. All this was to further the canvass of Henry Clay for the Presidency. In 1844, when I was only eight years old, that pole, with the flag flying by day and colored lanterns at the mast-head by night, made me an ardent Whig, and Henry Clay's ignominious defeat at the election seemed to me an inexpressible sorrow. Nor can I forget that other liberty pole which lifted its head on the triangle ground where Mr. S. Millman's Sons now provide us with lobsters and strawberries. These two poles seemed to guard and protect the city, for at that time our district schools had not yet learned to marshal their pupils and to salute the flag every morning. We were patriotic enough, but we were also "unprepared."

I must go back, through Exchange Street, to the Erie Canal. In its day that was as great an achievement as is the Panama

Canal of our own day. It was at that time the longest canal in the world. It was built in eight years and four months. In 1824, cannon along its banks transmitted from Buffalo to New York the news that the Canal was opened. Ten years after that, I saw packet boats arriving and departing, at the Exchange Street Station. The Rochester House on the southwest bank was the crack hotel of the town, and the great gathering place of visitors from abroad. The new Aqueduct had cost \$600,000, and it still remains a solid and artistic structure that puts to shame the bridges with which we have defaced the landscape. I well remember the excitement with which I took my first voyage on the Erie Canal, from Rochester to Albany, when, at the age of twelve, I went alone to attend the State Fair. There were competing lines of boats, and each sought to impress the public by its superior speed and accommodations. Boats left Rochester at seven o'clock in the morning and arrived in Albany on the third day, in time to take the steamboat to New York. None of my ten voyages to Europe have been so stirring as was that trip on the "raging canal."

The Rochester House was a great hotel for a city of only ten thousand inhabitants. In 1834 its location on the bank of the Canal and at the western end of the Aqueduct gave it prestige and patronage. But I have never heard mentioned in any history what to my mind was its chief distinction, namely, that it housed in its great parlor the first really important Debating Society of the city. My father's position and acquaintance procured for me, when only sixteen, an invitation to join this Society of much older men. It was called "The Orion," to intimate modestly that its members constituted a galaxy of stars. Its aim was to cultivate the art of public speaking. Each member was required, at the beginning of each meeting, to utter himself extemporaneously on some subject which he himself chose, and to hold forth for at least five minutes. This first exercise was followed by a debate on some subject mutually agreed upon, and the debate lasted often until midnight. Suppers were frowned upon. I remember only one of these, and some of the members declined to attend it, upon the ground that oysters were foreign to the educational purpose of the Club, and were often surreptitiously accompanied by beer. But the Society had eloquence enough to swamp the House of Representatives. Heywood and Gliddon and Watson could orate interminably. All this was attractive to a boy of sixteen. I learned to think on my feet, and I have ever

since been thankful that I had that association with voluble and thoughtful men.

The Canal had another hotel upon its banks—the United States Hotel, on Buffalo Street, now Main Street West, which the University of Rochester at first bought and occupied. Oliver Wendell Homes treated a serious matter rather humorously, when he said that an omnibus full of professors and students from the College at Hamilton came early enough in the Spring to have a crop of freshmen with the first green peas. But such was the humble origin of our University. These were giants in those days. The coming of Dr. Martin B. Anderson to be President made certain a steady and vigorous growth. When I think of that company of tall and alert men whom I met when I began my theological course in 1857—Maginnis, Anderson, Robinson, Kendrick, Northrop, Richardson—six men, all of them six-footers, I cannot repress a feeling of admiration. They were pioneers, stalwart and determined, and they made the University and the Seminary truly great. Again I have to be thankful that I ever came in contact with teachers so able and inspiring, so self-sacrificing and faithful. They have ceased from their labors, and their works follow them. Next to the influence of religious revivals must be reckoned the formative influence of education, in shaping the intelligence and character of Rochester.

It seems a very minor educational influence, but, to be perfectly veracious, I must mention Bishop's Museum. It was situated on Exchange Street, upstairs, near the present quarters of the Genesee Valley Trust Company. It was the precursor of our modern Moving Pictures, Art Galleries, and Cabinets of Geology and Mineralogy. The Eden Musée and Madame Tussaud never made such an impression on me afterwards as did that so-called oyster-shell three feet in diameter, and those wax-work figures of Othello, not smothering, but stabbing Desdemona. There bloodthirsty Indians were always scalping helpless settlers, Bluebeard gloated over his victims, and Queen Elizabeth glared pitilessly upon Lady Jane Grey. Jenny Marsh Parker has written eloquently of the learned pig that was exhibited there, "the famous pig that could pick out any playing card called for and could even spell and add. For twenty-five cents one could behold not only some small remains of the mastodon found in Perinton, but wax figures whose glittering eyes, and genuine daggers, and redundant hair, made little children scream with terror." One may smile at such a collection,

but I can truly say that what I saw in that dusty museum gave me a desire to know something of science and of history. "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts," and "the child is father of the man."

And why should I be silent about the great work of Henry A. Ward, my schoolmate of early days, whose collection of rocks, minerals and fossils was first exhibited in the great upper room of the building on the south-west corner of Buffalo and Sophia streets? He was a born scientist, with a bent for the making of teaching cabinets. He had a love for each science as a whole. He had no desire to make a collection simply of fishes. He wished to show the progress of life from the protozoa upward to man. His cabinets in Rochester, Vassar, Richmond, Chicago, are masterly in their comprehensiveness and completeness. To make them up, he became a great traveler. He visited Iceland and the Congo, Alaska and New Zealand. He crossed the Andes before there was a railroad, and was the guest of Boer magnates in South Africa before the war. He would go to a quarry where important specimens were to be found, would select with the eye of an expert the minerals or fossils which would fill out gaps in his stores, would exchange these with the British Museum or the Imperial Museum at Berlin, all the while aiming to make his acquisitions an all-round teaching force, representing the whole history of creation. It was a noble ambition, but it made him a wanderer on the face of the earth, whose stories of adventure were humorous and thrilling in the extreme. He hated publicity, and he liked to collect better than he liked to teach. But he was the greatest collector that this country ever knew. His chief monument is the great Field Museum of Chicago, for which he received one hundred thousand dollars. But the Cabinet of our own University has a unity and completeness of its own, unsurpassed by any similar collection in this country. Many unique illustrations of past forms of life make it a greater credit to Rochester than our citizens generally appreciate.

I have seen three several Court Houses in this City. Until 1850 there was only the old Court House, erected in 1821 at a cost of \$6,715. It had a projecting portico with four Ionic columns, and an octagonal belfry covered by a cupola. To this domicile of justice my father sent me at the age of thirteen, to hear a murder trial, in which a Dr. Hardenbrook was arraigned for the killing of his wife. I listened with rapt and awed attention to the plea of Mr. Tremaine, of Albany, in which he scath-

ingly urged the jury to bring in a verdict against the accused. But the jury was recalcitrant, and Dr. Hardenbrook was acquitted. Three years after, our second Court House had taken the place of the first, and this one cost \$72,000. It was of brick, three stories in height, and surmounted by a wooden dome, upon which rested another smaller dome, with a statue of Justice and her scales crowning the whole. Four massive stone columns upheld the roof of the portico and gave an air of dignity to the edifice. And in its court room, I witnessed one of the most impressive scenes of my life. Judge Iva Harris of the Supreme Court, who afterwards became Chancellor of the University of Rochester and Senator of the United States, was to pronounce sentence upon a brutal criminal, whose ignorance of the English language made necessary the intervention of an interpreter, even to communicate to him the meaning of the words that sealed his doom. Those who knew Judge Harris have not forgotten the large mould of his mind and the correspondingly magnificent port of the man. The bearing of the Judge that day seemed the very embodiment of the majesty and impartiality of the law. But, coupled with this, there was a deep compassion for the miserable being before him. As he addressed the convicted man, tears were seen trickling down his cheeks, his voice trembled and broke, he could not go on. The solemn hush of that court room was like the silence of the grave that was just opening to receive the murderer. Justice paused—but justice must be done. With a struggle that shook his whole frame, Judge Harris regained his self-control, and the words were spoken that consigned the convict to a felon's death. Those words were awful, because it was felt that there could be no recall. I learned in that court room something about processes of law, but I learned a better lesson still, namely, that Justice is no respecter of persons, and that from her final decisions there is no appeal. Our third Court House cost, with its furnishings, more than \$800,000, and it shows how great has been our advance in population and wealth; but I am always sorry that the statue of Justice with her scales could not surmount the edifice as it did the structure of its predecessor.

Old Corinthian Hall housed the Athenaeum. It was a famous gathering place for concerts and lectures. I heard Jenny Lind sing there, on a summer evening. The windows were all open, and her flute-like voice was heard by people sitting on the roofs, across the river, hundreds of feet away. The Athenaeum was



the forerunner of our Mechanics Institute, and in Corinthian Hall it gave courses of lectures by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John A. Dix, Horace Mann, Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, and Henry Ward Beecher. Three men, however, caught my fancy in those days in an especial degree. One was William H. Seward, when he took me on his lap at the age of ten, and uttered prognostications of my possible future greatness, upon the one condition that I would be a good boy. The second was Daniel Webster, who swung round the circle after he had voted for the Fugitive Slave Bill, and strove in vain to calm the indignant conscience of the North. It was a bitterly cold day when in 1851 he addressed the people of Rochester in Reynolds Arcade. He stood in the gallery at the south end, with eyes shining like torches in a cavern, and cheeks red either with cold or brandy. He seemed the very image of disappointed ambition; yes, he seemed even then to be on the edge of the grave. And though the crowd was so great that there was almost a panic when the gallery creaked with its weight, Daniel Webster drew from that audience little or no applause. Rochester was once called "a hotbed of isms," and Abolitionism was one of the "isms." Rochester took little stock in the maintenance and defense of slavery.

The last man I shall mention was the greatest of the three. It was Abraham Lincoln. He was proceeding to Washington in 1861 to take his oath of office as President. In the old Railway Station on the west side of the Genesee, he emerged from his sleeping-car to greet the crowd that welcomed him. His gaunt form seemed worn with care, but he had the air of a man who was called by duty to a high destiny. Every hearer of that brief address felt assured, after he had finished, that "honest old Abe" would do the right thing in the Presidential chair. I never saw him after that, unless I may claim to have seen him pass to his burial. From a balcony in Broadway, New York, I looked down upon the catafalque that bore his mortal remains to their last home. As far as the eye could reach, up and down the great avenue, soldiers filled the street from curb to curb, twenty bands with muffled drums were playing the dead march, and the sidewalks were crammed with spectators in tears. I have long thought that it would be only fitting that there should be two monuments in our National Capitol precisely alike, one to Washington, the other to Lincoln.

In conclusion, I must say something about the churches of

early Rochester. Of course, my first recollections are of the old Baptist Church on North Fitzhugh Street, where my father was a deacon. There had been services there long before I was born, commemorative of the deaths, on the same fourth day of July, of our two Presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. And when William Henry Harrison died, only a month after his inauguration in 1841, our Baptist Church held another service to commemorate the work of the hero of Tippecanoe. The funereal hangings, the dirgelike music, the solemn sermon of that occasion, most deeply impressed me. I learned a lesson of patriotism, as well as of religion. I well remember the old First Presbyterian Church, which stood opposite St. Luke's, upon the site of our present City Hall, and which was ministered to by Dr. McIlvaine, the chief opponent of Mr. Finney's revival methods. I remember the Brick Church, under the ministry of the beloved Dr. Shaw, Mr. Finney's chief supporter, where Mr. Finney sometimes fairly thundered and lightened. I remember the First Methodist Church, on the ground of Duffy's Department Store, and the Asbury Methodist, where the East Side Savings Bank now stands. Opposite the Asbury Methodist was the Second Baptist Church, on the ground now occupied by Sibley, Lindsay & Curr. But I owe most to the old Bethel Church, which stood on the North side of the Canal on South Washington Street, and which afterwards became the Central Presbyterian Church; for it was there that I made the greatest decision of my life. Mr. Finney, the evangelist, under whose rough ministry my father had been converted in 1839, came a second time to Rochester in 1856. A great company of men, many of them our first citizens, who had begun a new life under his preaching twenty-six years before, rose up like a body guard to do him honor and to support him. Rochester was visited by one of those earth-shaking revivals that defy criticism and change the face of a whole community. I was at that time a Junior at Yale, but I spent my Spring vacation at home. Mr. Finney's reputation, and an inner unrest of spirit, led me to attend one of his meetings. The question was propounded to me: "Will you from this time serve God, instead of yourself, looking to him to show you the way, and doing His will as fast as it is made known to you?" And I answered: "Yes, I will." I went out into the dark, that night, doubtful about my future course; but I went back to College, determined at any rate to be a Christian. Light came in time; and here I am to give thanks to God and

to the Central Presbyterian Church, which in its earliest days gave me the opportunity of setting my feet in the right direction. Rochester owes more to revivals of religion than it owes to its providential location or to the energy of its people; for without those revivals it is questionable whether there would have been anything like the education or the enterprise that have characterized the city.

Thus I have wandered on in my story, more and more interested in it myself, as the burial-places of memory have given up their dead. I cannot expect you to be as interested as I have been, and I have therefore withheld as much as I have given. I have not attempted sketches of personal character, though many a man of note shines out of the misty past, and many a celebration like that of the rag-a-muffin "Invincibles" rings its bells in my memory. I seem to see that splendid young soldier, Gilman H. Perkins, with his gallant company of Union Grays. I remember the crowd on Main Street, when our first regiment marched to the Civil War, and the wives and sweethearts of the men walked, perhaps for the last time, by their side. I remember Levi A. Ward's generosity and hospitality. I remember the Rochesters, after whom the city had been named, and who gave it character from the beginning. I remember Hiram Sibley and Lewis H. Morgan, Isaac Butts and S. P. Allen, Mortimer Reynolds and William C. Bloss, Everard Peck and William Alling, D. W. Powers and D. M. Dewey, the Chapins and the Bissells, the Ellwangers and the Sages, the Elys, the Moores and the Smiths. And last of all, and the funniest figure of all, I remember Othello Hamlet Etheridge, in his black velvet cutaway coat and white trousers, his ruffled shirt and red waist-coat, his Byron collar and patent-leather boots, whose work was sign painting, but whose specialty was diamonds. Was there ever such a compound of taste and vanity? He thought himself a born actor, and he was persuaded to make his *début*, as Hamlet, on the stage. But, alas, he was seized with stage-fright; a single snicker from the audience caused him to collapse; and he rushed frantically, amid roars of laughter, into the green-room and into histrionic oblivion. I could tell you ever so many stories about Rochester celebrities, and many of them deserve commemoration. But I will not have you accuse me of the garrulity of old age, and so I rest my case, as the lawyers say, and relieve your patience.

However, I have the right to a postscript, and I cannot

refrain from saying, before I sit down, that I have seen Rochester grow from fifteen thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The house of Mr. and Mrs. Willard, once the house of Silas O. Smith, on East Avenue, seemed in my boyish days to be far out in the country. What a noble expansion there has been to the South-east! But this is almost equaled by the North-east, North-west and South-west. The wilderness has come to blossom as the rose. Every year our city has become more prosperous and beautiful. I have circumnavigated the United States, and I have traveled much in foreign lands, but I have never found a city with so large a proportion of comfortable homes or such a general air of culture and refinement. No street in the world surpasses East Avenue, unless it be the street of millionaires in Pasadena, California. No city is better provided with educational facilities, or has a society more appreciative of merit. We have a goodly heritage. Let us be thankful to the fathers who founded our institutions, who planned our hospitals and our parks, who set the pace for our own generation by their plain living and high thinking.

When I go to Mount Hope, I am reminded that a large part of Rochester is underground. Eighty-one thousand have been already buried there—five times as many as lived in Rochester when I was born. My first pastor, Dr. Pharcellus Church, delivered the dedicatory address at the opening of that beautiful cemetery, and in the Village Reader, one of my first text books, his address was printed as a model for declamation. He interpreted the name Mount Hope as meaning that death does not end all, but is only our time of beginning, and that hope can never hope too much as we look into the future for ourselves or others. What shall be the future of Rochester? Let us fixedly resolve that, so far as in us lies, we will hand down, to those who come after us, what we have ourselves received, but with some increment of intelligence and purpose due to our peculiar opportunities and experience. "Other men labored, and we have entered into their labors"—"As we have freely received," so let us "freely give."







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